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Vol. 2.] **Library Assistants' Association.** [No. 8.

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## SOME COTGREAVE LIBRARY AIDS. A FEW TESTIMONIALS.

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### THE INDICATOR.

**"Library Construction, Architecture, Fittings, and Furniture." By F. J. BURGUYNE. 1897.**

"The Cotgreave Indicator is that in use in the majority of the British Free Libraries."

**"The Free Library: Its History and Present Condition." By J. J. OGLE, 1897.**

"The Recording Indicator is almost certainly the invention of Mr. A. Cotgreave (Public Libraries, West Ham, London, E.), and is that most largely used."<sup>\*</sup>

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### "THE SCOTSMAN."

"All the London Free Public Libraries (except one or two which do not use indicators), have adopted the Cotgreave System, which has been found to work well." †

N.B.—See also "Greater London," by E. Walford, M.A., F.S.A. (page 360); "Methods of Social Reform," by Prof. W. Stanley Jevons, M.A., F.R.S., LL.D.; "Public Libraries," by T. Greenwood, F.R.G.S.; &c., &c.

<sup>\*</sup> As a matter of fact it will be found in about nine-tenths of the Libraries using indicators. Over 300 Institutions are now using it.

† Sixty-two Public Libraries in London and the Metropolitan area are using it.

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### MAGAZINE RACKS.

"FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY, WANDSWORTH.

The Cotgreave Magazine Rack has been in use in the news-room here since the opening of the Library. I can unhesitatingly speak of its value, for it greatly tends to keep the tables tidy. Being so compact it takes up little room, and a reader can see at a glance the periodical he wishes to read.\*

C. T. DAVIS, Secretary and Librarian."

<sup>\*</sup> The Cotgreave Racks are in use at some 50 Libraries and Literary Institutions, from which similar testimonials have been received.

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### THE CONTENTS-SUBJECT INDEX, TO GENERAL AND PERIODICAL LITERATURE.

Price to Subscribers, 7s. 6d.

(500 copies have already been subscribed for.—See List).

### "DAILY NEWS."

"A 'Contents-Subject Index to General and Periodical Literature' would, if properly done, be a great time-saving machine. Such a work is being undertaken by Mr. A. Cotgreave. The first part, which is now before us, is distinctly promising. It will be helpful to many students and readers."

### "DUBLIN REVIEW."

"The Editor of the 'DUBLIN REVIEW' (Canon Moyes), desires me to thank you for the specimen of the 'Contents-Subject Index,' and to say that he has formed a high opinion of it, in fact he has already found it useful."

T. W. HUNTER, Librarian, Archbishop's House, Westminster.

Similar expressions of opinion have been received from a large number of leading journals, and from many well-known English and American Librarians.

N.B.—The Contents-Subject Index will be supplied to all Library Assistants at a reduced price, if applied for before publication.

Full particulars of the above and also of other Library Aids sent upon application.





## THE LIBRARY ASSISTANTS' ASSOCIATION.

FOUNDED 1895. FIFTH SESSION. YEAR 1899-1900.

*Members are requested to carefully read the announcements appearing on this page, as no further intimation of meetings and other arrangements will be sent out.*

### MAY MEETING.

The eighth meeting will be held on THURSDAY, May 17th, at 8 p.m., at the Public Library, North Side, Clapham Common, when Mr. Henry Ogle will read a paper entitled "A Library Primer." This meeting is arranged for a Thursday in order to meet the wishes of assistants whose libraries close on that day. Mr. and Mrs. J. Reed Welch would like to see a very large attendance of members and friends, and will provide light refreshments half-an-hour before the meeting. Those intending to be present are particularly requested to send Mr. Welch an intimation by Post Card three days beforehand if possible.

*At this meeting will be elected two auditors to audit the accounts of the Association for the year, and to act as scrutineers for the election of officers and committee at the Annual Meeting.*

### ANNUAL MEETING.

The Fifth Annual Meeting will be held at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, June 20th, at 20, Hanover Square, W.

All nominations for Officers and Committee, and all notices of proposed amendments to the Rules of the Association, and of motions, should be made in writing to the Hon. Secretary *pro tem.*, on or before May 17th, so that they may be sent out with the Annual Report in the June Journals.

N.B.—*The Committee now consists of ten London and ten country members. Nominations of not more than 20 members in all may be made by any member.*

### APRIL MEETING.

The eighth meeting of the session was held at the Battersea Central Library on April 25, when Mr. Inkster presided.

The Junior "Greenwood, 1899" Prize Essays were read, Mr. T. Glazier, of Streatham, the First Prize-winner in the subject "The every-day work of an assistant in a library," being present to deliver his own. Mr. Chambers kindly read the essay by Mr. W. C. Sayers, of Bournemouth, which was awarded the Second Prize, and likewise his First Prize Essay in "My professional studies," in the regretted absence of the author. Mr. S. G. Mattocks, the Second Prize-winner read his own paper at the meeting. An interesting discussion took place.

Mr. Inkster said we could not but feel an interest when we come to review our daily work, in the most minor details, even in the cutting and stamping of papers. As one of the adjudicators in awarding the Greenwood prizes, he was struck with the high level of thought shown in the essays. They must not be discouraged if a prize

does not fall to their share. The task of composition was very good practice, and he would advise everyone to go in for the competition whether he hoped to win or not. He had been considering the possibilities of division of labour in the work of the library, and had decided, experimentally, to let every assistant take turn, month by month, at every kind of work, so as to give each one an opportunity of all round experience. Some of the competitors speak of their relations with the readers. They knew the man, who, having received his ticket, forgot that he had it, and would not be persuaded to search his waistcoat pocket. He had discovered that man twenty-five years ago, and his experience told him that borrowers were very much the same now as then, and perhaps would always be so. Every assistant should know one or two languages besides his own, and they would find it much easier to learn now than when they became older.

Mr. Chambers congratulated the essayists who had read their own papers, on the practice thus gained in an art invaluable to librarians, that of public speaking. Some day they might be in a position to write annual reports, and conduct the official correspondence of a library, and would find that their present efforts had been useful in training them to do so in a decent fashion. It was necessary to keep up one's studies, as they were easily forgotten. Mr. Dyer quoted the dictum that every librarian should also be an author in order to be in sympathy with his work, but did not hold with it. A race of literary librarians was not, perhaps, just what was wanted. A librarian should be a man who knew the needs of his readers, and how best to supply those needs. We had fortunately an improved style of education now, but there was danger that the task of learning might be made almost too easy, developing a sort of feeling that a 'cataloguing knowledge' was sufficient. He wanted to know what was meant by a 'cataloguing knowledge,' and drew attention to the inaccuracies resulting from such a knowledge alone. Mr. Rees had found the essays suggestive on the ground they covered, and considered that we should be encouraged by them to take up anew studies of value in the work, which we had, perhaps, let drop. Mr. Hogg had heard the essays with pleasure, and was glad to note the interest taken by juniors in study, and welcomed the inauguration of a scheme by his chief, which would give every member of their staff an opportunity of learning something of library work all round. Mr. Ogle said that better results might have been obtained if every competitor had kept his subject properly in view when composing his essay. There was too much tendency to beat about the bush instead coming straight to the point. John Morley maintained that style came less from reading than from thinking clearly. If the thought that you wish to express is definite in your mind, you can scarcely fail to write it lucidly. Lucidity was the soul of style. A successful meeting was brought to a close with very hearty thanks to the essayists, and to Mr. Inkster for his kindness in presiding, and allowing the Association the use of a room.

#### N.W. BRANCH: APRIL MEETING.

The monthly meeting was held on Saturday, April 7th, and was notable as being the best attended gathering of the L.A.A. in the district, this being largely due to the fact that the Oldham Central Public Library was the place of meeting.

The members met in the Library about 4 o'clock, and inspected the various departments, proceeding thence to view the Spring Exhibition of Pictures in the Art Galleries. After tea, in the unavoidable absence of Mr. Bateman, Chief Librarian, Mr. T. H. Swann occupied the chair, and Mr. W. Berry, of Oldham, delivered an able paper on the qualifications of a Librarian.

Mr. W. Quarmby, of Oldham, then addressed the meeting on "Classes for library assistants in the N.W. District." The discussion resulted in the appointment of a special committee, consisting of Messrs. Berry, Crompton, Dickens, Gordon, Haworth, Quarmby, and Swann, charged with the duty of constructing a scheme of classes suited to the requirements of members, progress to be reported at the May meeting. A hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. Bateman and the Staff for their kindness, and acknowledged by Mr. Berry, in the regretted absence of his Chief.

P. D. G.

#### N.W. BRANCH: MAY MEETING.

By the kind permission of Mr. C. W. Sutton, the next meeting will be held at the Public Library, Openshaw, Manchester, on Wednesday, May 16th, at 8 p.m., members to gather at 7.30 at the Royal Hotel, Moseley Street.

#### L.A. EDUCATION COMMITTEE.

We understand that the Education Committee of the Library Association is at present arranging to hold, during the last week in June, a series of visits to libraries in and around London. Details are not yet completed. This form of a Summer School will prove of much practical use to those attending it. The date is announced now in order that assistants wishing to attend may be enabled to make the necessary arrangements. Mr. Henry D. Roberts, the Hon. Sec. of the Committee, will be glad to receive names of any assistants who may wish to be present. By the way, we note with pleasure that Mr. Roberts has been elected on the Council of the Library Association to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. Frank Campbell.

#### THE NEW PUBLIC LIBRARIES BILL.

This Bill has passed the third reading in the House of Lords. An important feature is the application of the Museums and Gymnasiums Act, 1891, to London. This enables the library authority to levy a special rate for the support of a museum, instead of, as heretofore, drawing upon the library rate for that purpose.

#### APPOINTMENTS.

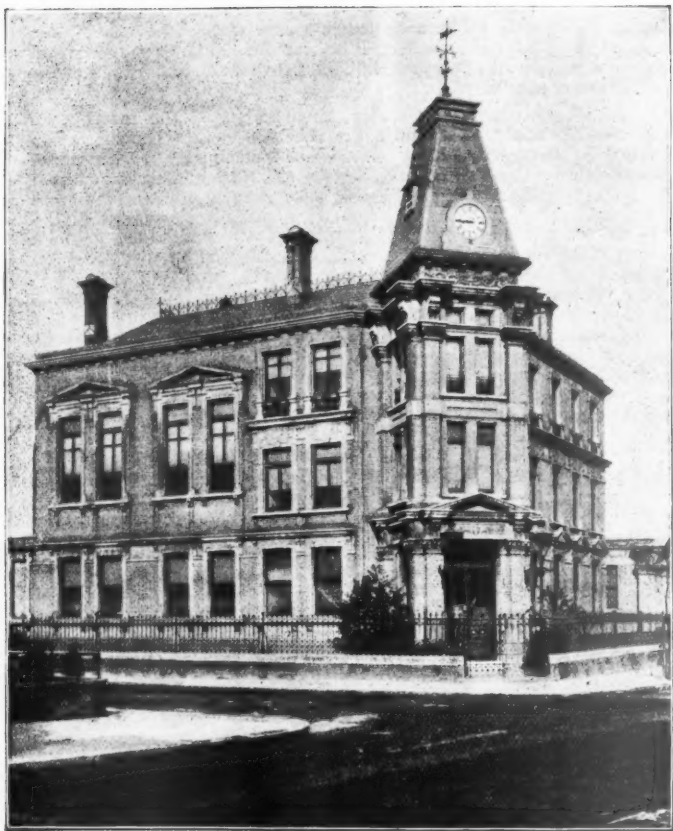
FIELD, Miss K., to be Assistant, Chelsea.

HODGES, Mr., of Spring Hill Branch, Birmingham, to be Librarian, West Bromwich.

HUNT, Mr. C. H., Sub-Librarian, Bootle, to be Librarian.

#### NEW MEMBER.

JUNIOR:—Mr. Samuel Goodier (*Lyceum Subscription Library, Oldham.*)



LEYTON PUBLIC LIBRARY.

The Public Library movement in Leyton commenced in July, 1891, when a few gentlemen of the district formed themselves into a Provisional Committee to arouse the interest of the inhabitants in the matter. A few months later, at a public meeting convened by that Committee, a resolution was passed calling upon the Local Board to poll the district, with a view to the adoption of the Public Libraries Acts.

In accordance therewith, a poll was taken, the result of which fully repaid the Provisional Committee for the time and trouble taken in fostering the movement. Those in favour of the adoption of the Acts were in a majority of 1,659.



The amount subscribed for the work of the Provisional Committee was £16 11s. 0d., but even this small sum was not spent, and the balance enabled them to present the first volume to the library.

The first rate of 1d. in the £ was levied in March, 1892, and the annual income has risen from £748 to £1,250.

No time was lost in pushing forward the establishment of the library. In July, 1892, the Librarian was appointed, and arrangements having been made whereby the Committee Room of the then Town Hall could be used until a permanent home had been found, the first purchase of books was made in October.

The next seven months were occupied in purchasing, classifying, and cataloguing books, and fitting the library. On the 1st day of June, 1893, a temporary lending library was opened with a stock of about 5,500 volumes, and a catalogue printed in time for the opening.

For upwards of three years the temporary library was carried on in this small room, but it was not long before the limit of its capacity was reached. All books then added were stored in a house near by, with those already purchased to form the nucleus of a reference library.

Many suggestions had been made since the opening of the temporary library with regard to the establishment of a permanent home for its reception. It had been originally proposed to build a Public Library and Technical Institute; but in the end it was decided to erect a new Town Hall and Technical Institute, and to adapt the old Town Hall to the needs of the Public Library. When that building was vacated by the District Council for its new quarters in the latter part of 1896, the work of structural alteration, refitting, lighting, etc., was commenced.

To obviate the necessity for closing the library during alterations, the classes of books in greatest demand were transferred to the basement of the Technical Institute, and issued from there until the following January, when the library was closed for a period of six weeks to prepare for the opening of its permanent habitation.

On February 23rd, 1897, the new library was formally opened by Mr. Arnold F. Hills, D.L., and on the following day all departments were ready for the public use.

Shortly after opening, the age limit for children was removed in both library and news room, and lectures by the Librarian to juveniles were afterwards instituted.

May, 1898, saw the establishment of the first branch, in the Wanstead Slip district. In the first place this branch was opened as a news room only, but in order to obtain a more satisfactory return for the time and money expended on it, the Committee established a delivery station there in February, 1899. This proved so successful that in the following December another delivery station was opened in the Leytonstone district.

At the present time the library contains a total stock of 15,700 volumes, 3100 of which are in the reference department.

The average daily issue of books from the Lending Library has been, during the past twelve months, 585, and from the Reference Library, 23.

W. B. Y.

## AN HOUR IN A GERMAN LIBRARY.

Just off the quay at Coblenz, between the Rhine whose waters have borne the ships of the Cæsars, and the Church of St. Castor whose vaulted aisles have echoed the footsteps of Pepin and Karl the Great, stands an ancient edifice with a huge, ill-fitting roof and dormer windows, the whole encircled by a castellated wall of the colour of decay: it is the Staatsarchiv, the depository of all the public and governmental records of the Rhine Provinces.

The building dates from the early Middle Ages, and was erected by the Knights of the Johannisten Order (or Knights of Malta, as we call them) whose arms appear over the portcullis. During the Napoleonic wars Coblenz fell into the hands of the French, and their commander, General Guérin, took up his quarters in the present library building. At that time a flight of massive stone steps led from the main corridor into the spacious court yard below. The gallant general caused the staircase to be demolished "*pour faire une belle courbe pour sa voiture*"; did ever one hear the like?—To make a fine sweep for his carriage indeed. Does it not attain unto the very height of ineffable egotism? Well . . . as old Sir Thomas Browne said long ago "The iniquity of oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy," and, truly, "oblivion is not to be hired." When Coblenz was re-occupied by the Germans in 1812 they, not to be outdone in imbecility, bricked up many of the fine Gothic windows, and converted the place into a granary; and such was their neglect that a fine wall painting of the Crucifixion, dating from the early 16th century, was allowed to become so bemired and forgotten that it was but recently unearthed.

At the instigation of a few influential citizens the building was at length taken over by the State, and on its vaults being ransacked a rich collection of MSS., etc., was discovered; and then it was delivered into the hands of the renovator. The German feeling for ornament is apt to be something naive—not to say vapid and coarse—in these latter days; for, having unbricked the windows and done the necessary repairs, the renovator saw fit to carry a sky of deepest azure over the ceilings with big golden stars peeping immodestly through every square inch of them: the result gives one pause.

An extensive Reference Library is housed in the central hall, a really fine structure and example of Gothic architecture at its best. The room is divided into aisles by two rows of ancient pillars, and the books and MSS. are arranged in alcoves on strong light pine shelving, provided with a kind of wooden buttresses to ward the volumes from the walls. A diffused light flitters through the stained glass windows, and the whole apartment breathes an atmosphere of quietude and study. This department of the Library I found to be specially strong in works of Philosophy, Theology, Philology, and above all in books, pamphlets, and other papers concerning the French Revolution of which the collection is one of the finest on the Continent.

A new fire-proof wing, consisting of five iron floors as in the British Museum newspaper store-room, has been added to the original building for the preservation of the archives. The documents are arranged in boxes which open at the side; each box bears a catalogue of contents outside, and each MSS. has a detailed description attached to its cover. As before stated, the Library contains all the public and governmental

records of the Rhine Provinces, including the parish registers, annals of private families, etc. Anyone who establishes his identity is permitted to consult either the ordinary books or the records, free of charge; but I think copies only of the more valuable documents are issued.

The Library Association has recently had this question of the preservation of local records brought under its consideration. It would appear from the above that the Germans at least have never doubted that the Public Library is the only natural repository of such papers.

JNO. RIVERS.

## THE RANGE AND INFLUENCE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES.—II.

The following passages are quoted from another short article:—

“Very few are prepared to go so far as to contend that the Free Library movement is a complete failure, but, unfortunately, fifty years of trial have demonstrated that it cannot be regarded as a success. . . . Can it be regarded as a satisfactory justification for the existence of an institution supported out of the municipal purse? Are the advantages gained in any way approximate to those which, in theory, would seem to be possible? There seems to be but little doubt that both these questions must be answered in the negative. . . . The average borrower has nothing whatever to guide him to a judicious choice of reading matter . . . the deplorable result is, that in the majority of Free Libraries, about four-fifths of the books issued are works of fiction. . . . Of the small number of works issued from the Free Libraries which are not fiction, we wonder how many are read! We doubt whether more than a third are seriously perused from beginning to end. . . . We have sometimes thought that one of the objects of News and Magazine Rooms was to afford to some of the most unclean and useless members of society a convenient asylum in which they may idle and sleep.”—*Review of the Week*, February 3rd.

A subsequent correspondent enquires whether this article was “written by the superior person for the superior person,” but there is, unfortunately, a sufficient modicum of truth in it to please opponents of our work, and to make it an effective partisan leaflet on the occasion of a poll to decide the adoption of the Acts. Superficial as are the statements and expressions of opinion given, it behoves all who have the interests of libraries at heart to allow no ground for corroboration. All who are particularly acquainted with the effect of public library work know that it supplies a certain requirement in a way that no other institution can do. We know a town possessing libraries with a stock of books sufficient for its needs, but owing to the subscriptions, or sectarian limitations, their influence is chiefly wasted, and the place has a benighted reputation which a Public Library alone would dispel.

A large number of letters resulting from the article quoted above was printed in succeeding issues, supplying an interesting view from the standpoint of persons who use Public Libraries. A great stumbling-block is the large percentage of fiction issued, which the writer of the

article, quoting from Mr. Gomme's County Council Return, puts at 80 per cent. for the whole of London. The remarks of the correspondents are usually very general. In one instance Hall Caine and Guy Boothby are regarded as the *Ultima Thule* of a depraved taste, another writer maintaining that but little noxious literature is harboured in Public Libraries, and seeing cause for gratification that a healthy alternative to the "penny dreadful" is to be found. It is said that Thomas Hardy and George Meredith are but names to most borrowers, and, on the other hand, that these and a "hundred others have a greater refining influence, and therefore educative value, which extends, not only to the mind, but also to 'the heart that weeps and trembles,' than 99 per cent. of our so-called 'serious' literature." A defence of the use of fiction, even to the extent of banishing other books if they interfere with the supply, is found in one letter, and another states that the heavier works are often bought for the private book-shelf, the Public Library being resorted to for light reading only. In one library a correspondent complains that the sets of Kipling, Stevenson, and Hardy are incomplete, and Mrs. Steel's works absent.

It is insisted by several correspondents that there is not sufficient guidance for readers to the contents of the libraries, and the catalogue is pointed out as deficient in this function. A suggestion is made to insert a short biographical note with author entries indicating the style and best works of each.

It is satisfactory to find that none of the correspondents think that the Public Library has been without its effective uses, though most of them are alive to the fact that its educational facilities might be more fully exercised by the public. The annotated catalogue and the alertness of the staff to the needs of individual borrowers are points easy to deduce from the letters.

A municipal officer once said that Public Libraries were for the use of the poorer section of the community, which was perhaps the original intention of the founders, but the possibilities of the movement have made it clear that the community as a whole benefits, directly and indirectly. No section is unrepresented amongst the borrowers, labourers, artisans, tradesmen, professional men, leisured and titled people are enrolled.

#### NOTICES.

All communications relating to the Journal should be addressed to Mr. Henry Ogle, *Hon. Editor, pro. tem.*, 14, Agincourt Road, N.W.

Annual subscriptions to the Journal are now due, and with subscriptions to the L.A.A., should be sent to Mr. W. G. Chambers, *Hon. Treasurer*, Public Library, Stoke Newington, N.

All other communications relating to the Association should be addressed to Mr. Armitage Denton, *Hon. Sec.*, L.A.A., *pro. tem.*, 17, Tyrawley Road, Fulham, S.W.





# THE CARD CATALOGUE.



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**J. HENRY QUINN,**

*Chief Librarian and Clerk to the Commissioners.*

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*Bookbinders & Booksellers,*

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